

# WIOA Regional and Local Area Designation and Redesignation Listening Sessions and E-Mailed Comments

## Organized by Local Areas

Listening Sessions	Hopkinsville Attendees/ Speakers	Frankfort Attendees/ Speakers	Hazard Attendees/ Speakers	TOTAL Attendees/ Speakers
Local Elected Officials	10 / 6	12 / 7	0 / 0	22 / 13
WIB Member	15 / 5	22 / 5	4 / 4	41 / 14
Community Stakeholders	30 / 2	60 / 10	11 / 1	101 / 13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55 / 13</b>	<b>94 / 22</b>	<b>15 / 5</b>	<b>164 / 40</b>

E-mail Comments	
Barren River	11
Bluegrass	1
Cumberlands	0
EKCEP	1
Green River	0
KentuckianaWorks	0
Lincoln Trail	0
Northern KY	0
TENCO	3
West KY	13
Unknown	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>

### BARREN RIVER

Several comments were received regarding maintaining Barren River in its current structure and several opposed, requesting to split the current structure into two Workforce Investment Areas.

#### Comments to maintain current structure: (Option 1)

- Attendance is very poor from the four county judge/executives in the South Central consortium at the Barren River WIB. BRADD is very familiar with the workforce development system. Professional staff and board.
- BRADD in existence for 46 years. Need to take into consideration the other services of the ADD: aging, transportation and roads. Concern over what split will do to the other ADD services.

- Experienced workers are at BRADD today.
- Audits have always been clean.
- Changes could come as a result of WIOA that could be made locally.
- Need to address the concerns the other four counties have with the issues.
- Current WIB is addressing employer needs.
- Proposed four-county LWIA would effectively undercut interdependence and diminish practical synergies that the 10-county region cherishes.
- The City of Bowling Green and the counties of Allen, Logan, Simpson and Warren have failed to define any public purpose to be served by dividing the region.
- Petitioners for change have inferred that structural similarities between the BGADD and BRADD warrant a radical remedy without alleging, let alone provide evidence of, any wrongdoing by BRADD.
- In its over 40 years of regional collaboration and cooperation, the BRADD has earned an admired reputation for competently and efficiently stewarding state and federally funded programs and projects on behalf of communities.
- The counties whose workforce and economic development interests that would be set aside by the petitioners seizing two-thirds of the available funds for workforce development are the most in need of workforce investment and the least able to afford the administration of federal funds.
- Partitioning the current regional workforce investment system and removing efficiencies currently enjoyed among ten counties to serve four, undercuts the region's ability to fulfill the demands of employers.
- Regional school systems, Area Technology Centers, Job Corps, Western KY University and Southcentral KY Community College, etc. are regionally focused.
- Scarce WIOA funds and the programs and services operated thereto benefit from an "economy of scale" by sharing overhead with 60 other programs and financial management.
- In the ten county BRADD region, the two Career Centers, located in Warren and Barren counties, operate together with statutorily-mandated partners, who would consequently be forced to either choose between partitioned LWIAs proposed by the petitioners, increase budgets to provide for duplication of services, or reduce their involvement in both.
- When it comes to workforce development, two governments are not better than one.
- Employers that have locations in two different regions may not have access to the same services.

#### **Comments to form new LWIA (Southcentral KY Works) – (Option 2)**

- South Central KY Works Consortium (Allen, Simpson, Logan and Warren) incorporated to achieve their vision of the group.
- Area accounts for 60% of the population; 70% of the businesses; and 74% of jobs represented.
- Want people to find jobs. Jobs are made locally, work locally and live locally.
- The way we have always done it is not acceptable.
- No trust in effectiveness under current structure.
- Realize there will be double administrative costs for two organizations, but looking to get additional funds to support the admin costs. Establish a 501(c)3 for purposes to raise funds to pay costs.
- Heard from employers that we need to move forward with new approach.
- Needs are different in the communities of South Central KY Works.
- Need to move forward with new approach.
- Doing the same thing and getting the same results.

- Introduce new practices that are best practices. Innovation based on evidence-based practices.
- Welcome remaining counties to join them.
- Focus on four key areas--visionary leadership, technology, investment and data outcomes.
- Engage a consultant to help them achieve their goals.
- Proponents for change tried working with ADD director and were told not to get involved.
- No accountability with current structure
- When ADD approached about issues and a resolution, there was agreement, but no action taken to reconcile.
- Push back from the current WIB to improve things.
- Largest economic area with the four counties—a natural synergy to keep these four counties together.
- Need new collaboration to meet the demand for new jobs.
- South Central KY Work will continually improve economy under their leadership.

#### **Other**

- Several comments were received from participants benefiting from services offered through BRADD requesting that BRADD be allowed to keep helping the community.

#### **BLUEGRASS**

Several comments were received regarding maintaining Bluegrass in its current structure and several opposed, requesting to split the current structure into two Workforce Investment Areas, Fayette County being a single LWIA.

#### **Comments to maintain current structure: (Option 1)**

- Sixteen fiscal courts have voted to stay the same. Don't fix what is not broken.
- Current structure functions well.
- Bluegrass region is more cohesive than any other region. Lexington is the hub.
- Natural patterns of education are cohesive workforce plans. Natural economic area.
- Makes no sense to cut the heart out of it.
- Dividing the region is a step away from the WIOA priorities.
- Current structure is codependent and meets the needs of rural and urban areas.
- Unsuccessfully attempted to split in 2009 when training center was closed.
- Tremendous step backward and does not support WIOA.
- The "cons" listed in presentation are the reasons why Bluegrass should stay the same.
- Extra costs to split up.
- Only five of 120 counties want change.
- Fayette County is vital to all the Bluegrass region counties.
- Integrity of the region is lost with split. Lose the participation of LEOs in region.
- Both BGADD Board and the KY Council of ADDs stated that they believed that the existing workforce boundaries should remain intact as originally envisioned because of the strategic advantages associated with aligning the planning, economic development, aging services and the workforce area regions for the purpose of achieving economies of scale and optimal efficiency for economic development opportunities and implementation of public policy.
- Current structure has existed since 1977 with minimal to zero deficiencies in meeting performance objectives.

- As the fiscal agent should not be considered in defining the local area, fiscal integrity should not be considered in setting the workforce boundaries.
- APA examination revealed eight findings and recommended corrective actions. Seven of the eight have been corrected. Last finding is new interlocal agreement. Sixteen of 17 have signed.
- Bluegrass ADD is organized around three departments – Planning through Community Planning Department, Projects through Workforce staff and Programs through Aging Services. All of these programs are vital to success of the organization – Synergy!
- Bluegrass Region is tied together by the KY River, Transportation, Education, Healthcare, Economic Dependence
- Regional advantage can only be explained by regional advantages associated with working together.
- The seven major industry sectors identified in the 17-county Workforce Area attribute their success to regionalism.
- Proponents to the split fail to recognize that the intent of the federal law is to create a partnership between local elected officials and business leaders. Their request to secede from the region will do nothing but create an impenetrable divide throughout the region.

#### **Comments to form new LWIA (Fayette County) – (Option 2)**

- Training provider noted he had never received a referral to his training facility.
- Region created 40 years ago—things are different in last ten years, let alone 40 years.
- Lexington has deep concerns about the workforce training of the BGADD.
- Must be able to adapt a more streamlined region.
- No additional funding is being requested.
- Do not want to harm other communities, wants to focus on Lexington’s workforce needs.
- Welcome neighboring communities to join with Fayette County.
- Current structure and model is outdated.
- Represents a positive step to workforce development.
- Contiguous counties could be included in the Fayette County WIB.
- BGADD is not at the table when doing economic development business.
- Keeping current structure is a mistake.
- Feedback from employers is that the system today is broken.
- WIOA presents an opportunity for systemic change.
- Toyota struggles to find manufacturing skilled workers.
- Workforce needs are not being currently met.
- Lack of interest from the private sector have left the BGWIB.
- WIOA gives us 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to job training--Streamlining the approach to workforce.
- Pockets of the community are struggling with high unemployment in Lexington. Status quo no longer works. Must adapt and evolve.
- Change is warranted. Serious thought has gone into this decision.
- ADDs provide a valuable service to areas, but BGADD is not a strength in Lexington.
- Resignation of business leaders from WIB is a message to the communities.
- Urban League of Lexington supports Fayette County split.

#### **Other**

- WIOA is a prime opportunity to change and strengthen the system. Taking the criteria into consideration that was presented during the Listening Sessions, Lexington is more than Fayette

County – it is an eight-county region. Steering committee should consider other options other than the two presented using more data. Do not accept the status quo.

- Accept Option 2 or variation.

### **CUMBERLANDS**

- Cumberland Operates outside the box
- More doable for Cumberland and EKCEP to be one region and TENCO go with a northern region. EKCEP and Cumberland share common borders and counties.
- Proposed structure is too large of a region.

### **EKCEP**

- Well pleased with EKCEP/KCEOC Workforce Services Program
- Do not want to see any changes
- With change, people lose focus. Change in EKCEP structure will cause staff to lose focus of the coal layoffs and other critical problems within the EKCEP economic area.
- Consolidation of areas will hurt the area. Continue EKCEP in its present form.
- Keep EKCEP as region for now, maybe expand later.
- SOAR initiative serves EKCEP and other organizations well. Going to a regional designation will have staff lose focus.
- Partners are working well together now. Spreading out the area to a region would make it a challenge.
- EKCEP has partnership with many agencies, CAPs, KCTCS, workforce, employers, etc. and is much respected in the area.
- Leadership is ready to move forward with new legislation. Staff have proven themselves.
- Not the time to make changes in LWIA designations. Do not change.

### **GREEN RIVER**

- WIB Chair support Option 1. Green River judges now have more interest since local elected officials in two areas have requested change
- Henderson Community College supports Option 1. Meeting the needs, fiscally responsible, encompasses economic area and involves employers.

### **TENCO**

- Regional areas are huge. Concern on that type of approach.
- Managing programs and responses have been handled very well. True collaborative effort.
- Demographics between TENCO and Eastern KY are very different.
- Local boards should be designated as a region alone.
- Diverse issues across the regional recommendation. (EKCEP- coal mining)
- Merging three areas together, TENCO 10 counties would get lost.
- Forcing into regions takes away local control.
- Merging with two large regions, TENCO may fall through the cracks and lose identity.

- Difficult to incorporate requirements of Regions (as stated in WIOA) pertaining to sector initiatives, performance expectations and labor markets in general.
- Support the local area being the Regional Area.
- Continue to utilize resources wisely and support projects that cross boundaries, but should not be “forced” by a regional plan that encompasses such a large area as proposed.
- Having a local and regional area will only add an extra layer of planning that will be cumbersome and time consuming.
- Mason County is not an ARC county and is not part of the SOAR initiative.
- Proposed region has many differences.
- Do not make hasty decisions. Take more time and make the best decision for all counties represented.
- Consider including Carter, Elliott, Morgan and Menifee counties in TENCO area. With this expansion, TENCO area could be designated a region itself.

#### **WEST KENTUCKY (Regional proposal comments)**

- Regional designations option would create a problem with individuals traveling over four hours.
- Bringing in a local area with possible fiscal integrity issues into a regional alignment is not a good thing.
- Do not consolidate the three areas into a region. It is recommended that the 17 county West KY Workforce Investment local area be designated as its own Economic Development Region.
- West KY Workforce Investment Board has successfully acted as an “economic development region” for the past 30 years.
- Seventeen counties make up one of the largest regions with two large ADDs and both are working together effectively to accomplish the goals put forth by the WIOA. The geographic area is sufficiently large enough to allow for economies of scale, yet small enough to be responsive to the workforce needs. No advantage in changing designation.
- Adding one more new arbitrary geographic boundary and calling it an Economic Region makes no sense.
- Minimal cost savings is not worth the loss in productivity.
- Proposed regions are too large to accomplish anything of relevance and the logistics of the commute for board members is unrealistic.
- West KY Workforce Investment Board (Purchase/Pennyrile) has already proven itself a strong and successful economic development region.
- Very little economic commonality in the proposed Economic Development Region.
- Proposed region does not align with the current sectors in West KY counties.
- Proposed region does not suit the economic diversity across the state, instead it eliminates the flexibility currently available to each boards’ ability to work quickly in responding to developing economic situations.
- The proposed Economic Development Regions are too big to be effective.
- Under the proposed Economic Development Region, strategic sectors West KY worked so hard to develop will be changed, reducing its effectiveness in delivering quality workforce and economic development services.
- Have been down this road before with the 9 Region idea some time back.
- Adding one more new arbitrary geographic boundary and calling it an Economic Region makes no sense.

- West KY has almost nothing in common with Barren River and Green River workforce areas, differing in industrial environments.
- Where is the support for having three regions? West KY has actual quantifiable data to support the value and integrity of the WKWIB.
- Having only one choice with three economic development regions is not realistic to the work done on a daily basis.
- Counties being combined into the West KY region have very little to do with the West KY WIB economy.
- Proposed area is too large and too diverse to be merged successfully.
- Proposed plan is over ambitious at this point in time.
- Consolidation will require a multi-agency realignment that could dramatically reduce each local workforce area's and economic corporation's effectiveness and ability to complete their current strategic plans.

#### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS**

- Each person has a different perception of workforce development. During the listening session in Hopkinsville, there was no mention of the job seeker to improve their quality of life or help the employer move ahead. The workforce system cannot follow the path it is currently on. It is a dysfunctional system. Opportunities are lost. There are too many agencies involved, accountability and efficiency is not achieved under the current system.
- It was the consensus of the Chief Local Elected Officials who met in Frankfort on January 30 (CLEO Special Session) that the Local Area Option 1 be adopted and also agreed with the Regional Intrastate Recommendation.